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**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please cancel claims 22 and 24 without prejudice or disclaimer of the underlying subject matter and add claims 25-30 as set forth below:

1. - 20. (CANCELED).

21. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An aluminum nitride/aluminum base composite material, which comprises:

(a) a base material obtained by preparing a preform having pores, obtained by sintering aluminum nitride powder, enclosing the preform in a container provided in a molten metal pressure apparatus, pouring a molten aluminum base material into the container, and, applying pressure to the molten aluminum base material in the container to fill the aluminum base material in the pores of the perform;

(b) a covering layer consisting of a ceramic material and covering a surface of the base material; and

(c) an intermediate underlayer, disposed between said base material and said covering layer, comprising about 5% nickel.

22. (CANCELED).

23. (CANCELED).

24. (CANCELED).

25. (NEW) An aluminum nitride/aluminum base composite material, which comprises:

(a) a base material obtained by preparing a preform having pores, obtained by sintering aluminum nitride powder, enclosing the preform in a container provided in a molten metal pressure apparatus, pouring a molten aluminum base material into the container, and, applying pressure to the molten aluminum base material in the container to fill the aluminum base material in the pores of the perform;

(b) a covering layer consisting of a ceramic material and covering a surface of the base material; and

(c) an intermediate underlayer, disposed between said base material and said covering layer, said intermediate layer comprising nickel containing approximately 5% weight aluminum,

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wherein the base material and the covering layer satisfy the relation of

$$(\alpha_1 - 4) \leq \alpha_2 \leq (\alpha_1 + 4), \text{ and}$$

wherein  $\alpha_1$  is the linear expansion coefficient of said base material and  $\alpha_2$  is the linear expansion coefficient of said covering layer.

26. (NEW) The aluminum nitride/aluminum base composite material according to claim 25, wherein the molten aluminum base material is poured into the container, together with silicon lumps.

27. (NEW) The aluminum nitride/aluminum base composite material according to claim 25, wherein the ceramic material constituting the covering layer is  $Al_2O_3$  or aluminum nitride.

28. (NEW) An aluminum nitride/aluminum base composite material, which comprises:

(a) a base material obtained by preparing a preform having pores, obtained by sintering aluminum nitride powder, enclosing the preform in a container provided in a molten metal pressure apparatus, pouring a molten aluminum base material into the container, and, applying pressure to the molten aluminum base material in the container to fill the aluminum base material in the pores of the perform;

(b) a covering layer consisting of a ceramic material and covering a surface of the base material; and

(c) an intermediate underlayer, disposed between said base material and said covering layer, said intermediate layer comprising nickel containing approximately 5% weight aluminum.

29. (NEW) The aluminum nitride/aluminum base composite material according to claim 28, wherein the molten aluminum base material is poured into the container, together with silicon lumps.

30. (NEW) The aluminum nitride/aluminum base composite material according to claim 28, wherein the ceramic material constituting the covering layer is  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  or aluminum nitride.